

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS OR QUESTION WORDS

Use **who** if you want to ask questions about people, like this:

Who did you talk to?
Who are those people?

The word **who** does not change. It is the same when you ask a masculine or feminine word, both in singular and in plural.

Some people write:	But when they speak, people almost always say:
<i>To whom shall we send the money?</i>	<i>Who shall we send the money to?</i>
	In other words, the proposition comes at the end, and the question word is who, not whom.

Use **where** if you want to ask questions about a place or position, like this:

Where do you live?
Where does it hurt?

Use **how** if you want to ask in what way or by what method you do something.

How does he spell his name?
How do you feel?

Also use **how** if you want to ask questions about numbers, sizes, ages, etc.

How old are you?
How big is it?
How many hours do you work?

Use **why** if you want to know the reason for something. The answer usually begins: "Because ..."

Why are you late? — *Because I missed the bus.*
Why don't you like me?
Why are you there?

Use **what** if you want to ask questions about people or things, like this:

What's she like?
What's the time?
What's your telephone number?
What does it mean?

Use **which** if you want somebody to choose from a small number of alternatives, like this:

Which football team do you like best?

Which train shall we catch?

Which floor do you want?

When there is a large number of alternatives, use **what**. Compare the following:

What's your address?

Which is your home, number 16 or number 18?

In the first example, there are many different alternatives. In the second example, there are only two alternatives.

Use **whose** if you want to ask who owns or possesses something, like this:

Whose drink is this?

Whose are these clothes?

Use **when** if you want to ask questions about time, like this:

When does this programme end?

When do you get up in the morning?

Remember this:

WHEN	is to ask about	Time
WHO		People
WHERE		Places or positions
HOW		The way you do something
WHY		The reason for something
WHAT		People or things
WHICH		People or things when there are only few alternatives
WHOSE		Who owns or possesses something

EXERCISES

What or which?

The questions you are asking have a number of possible answers.
If the list of answers is incomplete, ask a question with *what*. If the list is complete, use *which*.

(Do you play the piano, or the violin, or the guitar, or...?)

What musical instrument do you play?

(Did you go to the Little Theatre or the Theatre Royal?)

Which theatre did you go to?

1. (Did you take the morning flight or the afternoon flight?)

2. (Did you stay at the Grand Hotel or the Bristol?)

3. (Do you like classical music, or jazz, or rock music, or...?)

4. (Did you buy "Time" magazine, or "Newsweek", or a computer magazine, or...?)

5. (Do you work for EuroChemicals, or ICM, or SenCo, or...?)

6. (Are you learning English, or Spanish, or Arabic, or Japanese, or...?)

What or which?

Rita is moving into a new flat. Trevor has come to see the flat and help her move in.
Complete his questions. Put in *what* or *which*.

Trevor: *What* number is this building?

Rita: Forty-two.

1 Trevor: I didn't realize there were only three floors. floor is your flat on?

Rita: The first floor.

2 Trevor: It's a very nice flat. room will be your living-room?

Rita: This one here, I thought.

3 Trevor: colour are you going to paint it?

Rita: Oh, I don't know yet.

4 Trevor: time is your furniture arriving?

Rita: Three o'clock, they said.

5 Trevor: I'll need some petrol. way is the nearest petrol station?

Rita: Turn left at the end of the street.

Who, what or which?

Detectives Wilson and Taylor are looking into the murder of Lord Weybridge at his country house.

Put in *who*, *what* or *which*.

Wilson: *Which* of the guests in this house is the murderer, do you think, Taylor

Taylor: I don't know yet. (1) had the opportunity? (2)
..... of the guests had the chance to do it?

Wilson: (3) happened after dinner last night? That's what we have to find out.

Taylor: There must be a motive for the murder. (4) motive could the murderer have?

Wilson: Love or money — they're the usual motives. (5) of them is it, I wonder?

Taylor: (6) did Lord Weybridge leave his money to? That's the question, Wilson.